

Section (c) - Remarks**1. General**

Claims 1 through 3 are pending in the present application. The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 through 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,085,169).

2. Response on Rejection

The Examiner has rejected each of the claims in the present application as being obvious in light of the Walker et al. patent. Applicant has canceled Claims 2 and 3 in the application and has amended Claim 1 to incorporate limitations that are believed to distinguish the present invention from the reference cited by the Examiner. Specifically, Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the database of vendor information is provided to the potential purchaser for review as an initial step in the process. Additionally, the steps of comparing and identifying have been amended to clarify that a comparison is made between the descriptions of the goods and services found in the RFP and in the vendor database. These steps have further been amended to clarify that they are carried out automatically by the computer.

Claim 1 has further been amended to incorporate the steps of generating a sub list of vendors that meet the goods and services matching criteria and presenting this list for review to the potential purchaser. Claim 1 further incorporates the step of the potential purchaser selecting at least one of the identified potential vendors for final communication of the RFP information. Finally, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the last step in the process; namely, the communication of an acceptance or rejection from the potential purchaser to the selected potential vendors.

Applicant would generally point out that Claim 1 as amended incorporates activities by the potential purchaser that serve to distinguish the RFP process from the CPO process that is

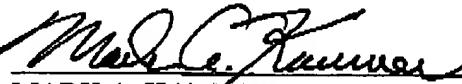
evident in the cited reference. These activities of the potential purchaser that occur throughout the process differentiate the present invention from the "blind purchase" made under the Walker et al. methodology.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has amended the claims to clarify the distinction between the present invention and the primary cited reference. Applicant now believes that the claim is in a condition for allowance and respectfully requests the same. Should any further impediments to allowance of the claim remain applicant requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney by phone.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: 10/14/2003